

In 2020, the Gun Violence Archive reported more than 40,000 deaths caused by gun violence, including over 1,300 children. Yet, despite the fact that gun violence continues to rise—and 90 percent of Americans, including 80 percent of gun owners support universal background checks—Republicans in Congress have spent years blocking bipartisan legislation to close our biggest loopholes and keep our communities safe.

Gun violence is preventable, yet it is such a tragically routine occurrence in this country that every community has a story. Mine is no exception.

I recently joined the Aurora Historical Society in Illinois to pay tribute to the five people murdered and the seven heroic first responders who were injured 2 years ago during a shooting at the Henry Pratt Company.

The mayor of Aurora, Richard Irvin, said after the shooting that “we as a society cannot allow these horrific acts to become commonplace.”

Yet, absurdly, we have already reached the point in which this unspeakable tragedy in Illinois is not even America’s most lethal mass shooting in a town named Aurora. So I call on my colleagues in the Senate to take action with us so that our children can someday live in a country in which gun violence is no longer commonplace.

Madam Speaker, as a nurse, I am thrilled that, in 2019, we finally directed Federal funding toward public health research on gun violence, for the first time in two decades. This type of research is critical for evidence-based policymaking, and I will keep fighting to make sure that that funding continues. But studying the problem is just the first step in our work to solve it. It is already past time to make simple changes that we already know work.

Madam Speaker, background checks are a simple, effective way to keep guns out of the wrong hands. A 1995 Connecticut law requiring background checks for firearm purchases was associated with a 40 percent decline in gun homicides and a 15 percent drop in gun suicides. Meanwhile, when Missouri repealed a similar law in 2007, gun homicides jumped by 23 percent, while firearm suicides rose by 16 percent. Homicides and suicides by other means stayed flat in both States; only gun violence changed.

I wish all our public health crises had such a clear, straightforward solution.

Madam Speaker, H.R. 8 would require a lifesaving background check for every gun sale, while H.R. 1446 would give the FBI more time to complete those checks before a single sale goes through. These bills would not add any new restrictions on who can buy a gun or what kind of gun that they can have. Rather, it would make it easier to enforce our existing gun laws and stop guns from being sold to people who are already prohibited from owning one.

Madam Speaker, I am not willing to wait for the next murderer to attack the next church in the next Charleston. I am not willing to wait for the next angry employee to murder his coworkers at the next Henry Pratt in the next Aurora, Illinois. I am not willing to wait for the next Aurora, Colorado, or the next Pulse Nightclub, or the next Parkland, or the next Tree of Life, or the next Sandy Hook. I am also not willing to wait for more women to be murdered by their abusers, or for more children to be lost to gun violence.

I am done waiting. My constituents are done waiting. Enough is enough.

Americans deserve to feel safe in their schools, in their houses of worship, in their movie theaters, in their workplaces, and in their homes. We can no longer live in a country where any building can so easily become a battlefield.

Madam Speaker, my colleagues and I in the House voted last week for a safer future for our children. Now I call on my colleagues in the Senate to save lives and send H.R. 8 and H.R. 1446 to the President’s desk.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o’clock and 19 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. STEVENS) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Margaret Grun Kibben, offered the following prayer:

Gracious God, as we approach another week of legislation, we pray with the psalmist Your favor on each leader in this Chamber. Endow them with Your righteousness, that the judgments of their hearts and the words of their mouths will demonstrate Your defense of the disheartened.

Grant them an understanding of Your perfect justice, that their legislation would reflect Your deep affection for those in need of Your salvation. May the words we speak to one another and the motions put forward be as refreshing as rain on a mown field. And may their decisions, their actions, and their passionate hearts serve this Nation as showers watering the earth.

Bless each and all of us that in all we say, in all that we do, in everything we accomplish this week would give honor to Your glorious name.

We offer this prayer to You in the strength of that name.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 11(a) of House Resolution 188, the Journal of the last day’s proceedings is approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MURPHY) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. MURPHY of North Carolina led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

SUPPORT THE NUTRITION CARE ACT

(Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER. Madam Speaker, March is National Nutrition Month, and I am proud to join my colleagues, Representatives JUDY CHU and JACKIE WALORSKI, in leading H.R. 1551, the Nutrition Counseling Aiding Recovery for Eating Disorders Act, or the Nutrition CARE Act for short.

Madam Speaker, eating disorders account for one death every 52 minutes and can impact the lives of individuals across their lifespan. This mental illness does not discriminate, but longstanding health inequities, implicit bias, and stigma contribute to why people of color with eating disorders are half as likely to be diagnosed or to receive treatment.

The Nutrition CARE Act would provide Medicare part B coverage for medical nutrition therapy for beneficiaries with eating disorders, meaning hundreds of thousands of Medicare beneficiaries who identify as Black, indigenous, or people of color would have coverage of a key treatment component.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to help lead this effort, and I urge my colleagues to cosponsor H.R. 1551 and bring it to the floor of this Congress.

CRISIS AT OUR BORDERS

(Mr. MURPHY of North Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MURPHY of North Carolina. Madam Speaker, as we speak, at President Biden’s behest, thousands of migrants are crossing our border illegally and being detained in facilities that are well over capacity.

Besides the many adults, the real victims are the thousands of unaccompanied migrant children, many being